

PERK CHEMICAL Co.
ELIZABETH, N.J.

252143



BRIAN V. MORAN - ECOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT INC, (TRENTON)

1/8/80

8-342-5500 / (201) 494-5871

MR. MORAN DID NOT VISIT THE SITE SINCE HIS REPORT (9/11-9/13/1979)

2/4/80 MESSRS. RON CONCORY AND GEORGE SHAGDA 8477-7875 PROMISED TO

BRING ME UP TO DATE ON PERK: WHERE DOES THE NJ STATE ATTORNEY

1) GENERAL STANDS IN HIS LITIGATION WITH PERK'S CONT'D OPERATION?

2) DID OSHA VISIT SITE? 3) ANY OTHER IMPORTANT INFO?

2/6/80 FRED RUBEL SUGGESTED TO CALL CHARLES TENERELLA (4-9382); FEDERAL REGIONAL COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE, MR. TENERELLA WILL LET ME KNOW IF OSHA DID ANYTHING...

2/11/80 CONTACTED MR. RADUL ILAW, US DEPT. OF LABOR - OSHA, 1515 BROADWAY, ROOM 3445, NEW YORK 10036, 212 944-3420 (FTS 8 662-3420) AND ASKED FOR INFO. - IF OSHA VISITED PERK, FOUND VIOLATIONS IF ANY AND OTHER INFO. HE REPLIED THAT OSHA VISITED THIS SMALL TYPE OPERATION, (WHERE SOME 10 PEOPLE ARE INVOLVED) SOMETIME IN 1977. THERE MAY BE SOME SMALL SAFETY VIOLATIONS. HE ASKED ME TO WRITE HIM AN OFFICIAL LETTER - WHICH I DID ON 2/12/80. COPY ENCLOSED.

2/20/80 ARTICLE IN THE NEW YORK TIMES: PERK AND 2 OTHER COMPANIES (WASTE HAULING FIRMS) WERE INDICTED FOR DUMPING A TOTAL OF 40 MILLION GALLONS OF ACID WASTE INTO ARTHUR KILL FROM 1973 TO 1979. ACCORDING TO THE INDICTMENT, IT SEEMS THAT PERK WAS THE SMALLEST OFFENDER. PERK IS ACCUSED OF ONE COUNT OF CONSPIRACY AND THREE COUNTS OF CREATING A NUISANCE AND VIOLATING THE WATER POLLUTION CONTROL ACT. THE MAXIMUM PENALTY AGAINST IT WAS \$129,000. - (OTHERS: IRON OXIDE CORP: 65 COUNTS... \$1.6 MILLION; CHEDLINE: 24 COUNTS... \$1.2 MILLION). OFFICIALS OF PERK CHARGED: RAY ROTSCCHILD, PRESIDENT, RALPH BELL & KEITH WHITE, TANK-TRUCK DRIVERS.

2/25/80 A FORM. LETTER REPLY ARRIVED FROM OSHA'S AREA DIRECTOR MR. RICHARD J. PALMIERI ADVISING THAT I WILL ~~HEAR~~ OF THE RESULTS OF INVESTIGATION, WHICH WILL BE CONDUCTED "WITHIN A VERY SHORT TIME". I ~~INFORMED~~ INFORMED CHARLES TENERELLA (OFFICE OF FEDERAL ACTIVITIES, ROOM 1009, #4-9382) OF THIS LETTER.

4/24/80 CALLED MR. ILAW TO BRING THIS ^{OSHA} INVESTIGATION UP TO DATE. MR. PALMIERI, AREA DIRECTOR COULD NOT BE REACHED, SO MR. ILAW WILL CALL BACK WITH REQUESTED INFORMATION. MR. ILAW REPORTS THAT THE PERK CHEMICAL IS BEING TESTED RIGHT NOW. IT SEEMS A SAFE OPERATION FROM OSHA'S POINT OF VIEW. AS SOON AS TEST RESULTS ARE OBTAINED EPA WILL BE INFORMED. PERK GOT A "HOUSEKEEPING CITATION" WHICH SHOULD BE IMPROVED.

6/5/80 OSHA'S REPLY - RECEIVED ON 6/9/1980.

Subject: Investigation Report Concerning the Perk Chemical Company, Elizabeth, New Jersey. Date: 13 September 1979.

Prepared by: Emergency Response and Inspection Branch

I. Background

The Perk Chemical Company is a small solvent recovery operation located on 217 First Street in Elizabeth, New Jersey, near the Elizabeth River. The site was brought to our attention through the Enforcement Division who reported that Perk may be storing flammables/combustibles adjacent to the large natural gas storage tanks located on Third Avenue. Perk experienced a spill of some 5,000 gallons of perchloroethylene in July 1979 due to a storage tank failure.

Mr. Brian Moran of Ecology and Environment (E & EI) and Mr. John Burger (E & EI) conducted a hazardous waste survey and SPCC inspection concurrently on 7 September 1979. Mr. Ray Rothschild (President of Perk) accompanied us during the investigations.

II. Nature of the Materials Disposed of at the Site

The Perk facility reclaims, by distillation, a variety of organic solvents. The bulk of their business is recovery of perchloroethylene (tetrachloroethylene). The major flammable organic processed is Methyl Ethyl Ketone (MEK). Table 1 lists the compounds which may be stored on site at any given time.

III. Description of Site

The Perk Chemical facility occupies approximately 2 acres on First Street in Elizabeth, New Jersey, about two blocks away from the Elizabeth River. The site is made up of a small office building, a solvent recovery/process area and a large storage area for both receiving raw chemical stocks and storage/shipping of recovered products. Structures are currently being erected for new

Table 1 - Materials Stored at Perk Chemical Company

Oils

- Machine oils
- Cutting oils
- Cooling oils
- (no motor oil)

Emulsions

Oily emulsion - (oil and water or oil and solvent)

Flammable Organic Liquids (Solvents)

- Toluol
- Xylol
- Mineral Spirits
- Naptha
- Kerosene
- Methanol
- Butyl Alcohol
- Isopropyl Alcohol
- Methyl Ethyl Ketone (MEK)
- Acetone
- Cyclohexanone

Acids and Alkali Solutions

- Caustic
- Detergent with alkaline base
- Sulfuric acid
- Nitric acid
- Acetic acid
- Hydrochloric acid

Non-Flammable Organic Liquids (chlorinated solvents)

- Tetrachloroethylene
- Trichloroethylene
- 1,1,1 Trichloroethane
- Methylene Chloride

production facilities. Approximately 600 feet away from the northwest corner of Perk's property are two large natural gas storage structures. Mr. Rothshild stated that he did not wish any photographs of the facility taken for our records. Therefore, no photos were taken of the site.

IV. Description of Surrounding Area

The Perk facility is located in a predominantly industrial area. Residential areas are located two blocks north and east of the Perk facility. The area is located in a 100 year floodplain area. The potential for contamination of public drinking water is minimal, since the closest public water supply (Elizabethtown Water Supply) is at least six miles away.

V. Geology and Groundwater

The Perk site is at an elevation of 10 feet throughout. The property is covered by both gravel and pavement. There was no evidence of runoff or erosion at the site.

VI. Sampling and Chemical Analysis of Samples

No samples are known to have been taken during the July spill incident or otherwise.

VII. Status of Local, State Involvement

Perk Chemical Company has applied for a DPCC¹ permit. So far, the permit has been denied. Apparently, Perk cannot implement their spill control program until an easement of the property with the U.S. Corps. of Engineers is settled. Also, according to Mr. DuHammel (N.J.D.E.P.) there has been no permit granted to operate the facility for the following reasons:

1. Spill cleanup facilities are inadequate.
2. Facility has too many drums stored.
3. Drum stacking procedures do not comply with New Jersey State

¹ Discharge Prevention Control and Countermeasure Plan

regulations.

The case is currently under litigation with the Attorney General's Office concerning the continued operation of the plant.

Conversations with Captain Gannon (City of Elizabeth Fire Prevention Bureau) lead us to believe that there is no apparent fire/explosion hazard to the natural gas storage tanks located on Third Avenue. The closest part of Perk's property lies some 600 feet away from the tanks. Oil drums (full) are known to be stored on this portion of the property. This section and other drum storage areas on the Perk site were sampled for explosive gases during the investigation. No evidence of explosive gases using the explosive meter were found in the storage areas.

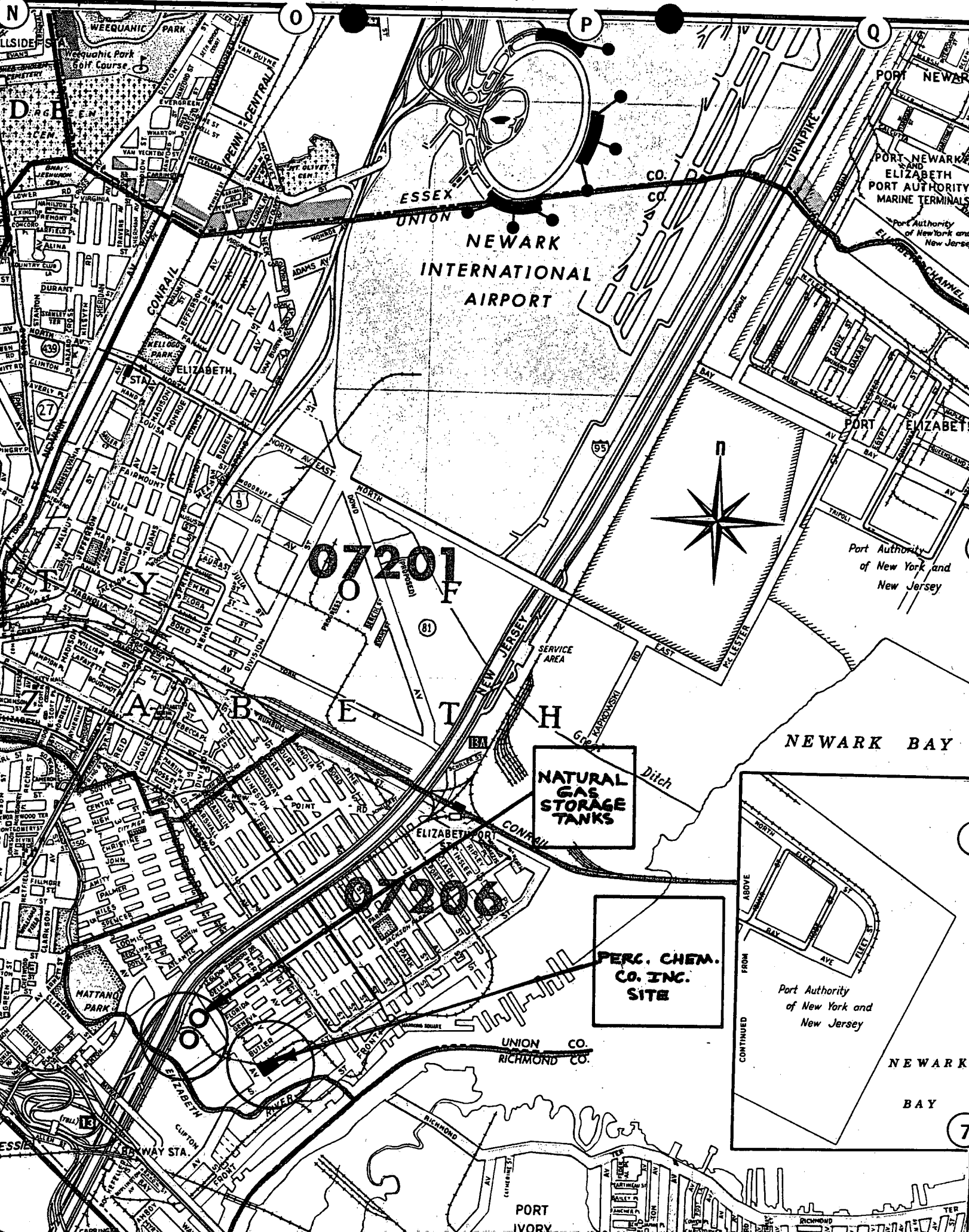
According to Captain Gannon, the City of Elizabeth inspects the facility for fire/explosion hazards 2-3 times a year. There are currently no violations cited against Perk by the City.

VIII. Discussion of Imminent Hazard Aspects of Site

The Perk facility is an active chemical refining facility, not a hazardous waste dump site. Although no immediate environmental hazards were evident at the Perk site during the investigation, there may be occupational hazards present for the process and plant operators. While surveying the plant, strong halogenated organic solvent odors were evident around the immediate chemical process area. It is suggested that OSHA be contacted for an inspection of the facility for compliance with PL 91-596, the Occupational Safety and Health Act.

Attachments:

1. Map
2. Site Plan
3. Survey Forms

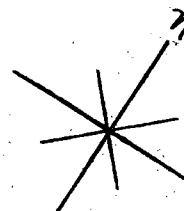


PERK CHEMICAL COMPANY

ELIZABETH, NEW JERSEY FACILITY

NATURAL GAS
STORAGE TANK

12600'



OIL
DRUMS
(FULL)
~200 DRUMS

FEED STOCK
STORAGE
AREAS
~1200 DRUMS

NEW
PROCESS
AREA
(UNDER
CONST.)

PRODUCT STORAGE
AREAS
MEK AREA
~1200 DRUMS

3rd AVE.

~1500
DRUM STORAGE
(EMPTY)

DRUM
STORAGE
~100
DRUMS

OFFICE
BLDG.

PROCESS
BLDG.

RUPTURED
PERCHLOROETHYLENE
TANK
(EMPTY)
~5K gal. Capacity

1st STREET



42-381 50 SHEETS
42-382 100 SHEETS
42-383 200 SHEETS
42-384 500 SHEETS
42-385 1000 SHEETS
42-386 2000 SHEETS
42-387 5000 SHEETS
42-388 10000 SHEETS
42-389 20000 SHEETS
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Ruptured tank spews toxin in Elizabeth

By ZANA W. COCO

Several thousand gallons of the dry cleaning solvent perchlorethylene leaked onto an Elizabeth street and down two catch basins yesterday when a storage tank ruptured at a chemical waste firm.

No one was injured in the accident.

Workmen from Perk Chemical Co., which owns the tank, began to mop up the spill which occurred shortly after 10:30 a.m. at 217 S. First St.

Officials said the black murky cleaning solvent had leaked from the ruptured tank housed at the front of the firm's property, forcing Elizabeth police to close the street to traffic.

A 6,000 gallon vacuum truck, owned by the company, was used to remove all the spilled chemical and sandbags were placed in the sewer lines to stop the flow, according to John Surmay, city health, welfare and housing director.

The firm also washed down the street to remove any excess spillage, he said.

City health officials were initially concerned over whether the chemical which entered the catch basins would have a serious affect on the treatment of sewerage after it reached the Joint Meeting Sewerage Authority plant a mile away.

However, Mike Brinker, executive director of the treatment plant said although workers noticed small traces of the chemical in the effluent, he did not think it was enough to cause alarm. As a precaution, however, he ordered his workers to take water samples every 15 minutes instead of hourly.

* * *

Ray Rothschild, owner of the chemical firm, said he did not know what caused the tank to rupture at the seams and would investigate the accident. He estimated less than 5,000 gallons of the solvent were in the tank at the time of the accident.

The firm receives chemical waste in drums and either sells it for recovery or re-use, or blends the wastes to produce other saleable mixtures.

The firm had applied to the Department of Environmental Protection's Solid Waste Administration in February for a permit to operate a special waste treatment and recovery and transfer facility.

In March, the city asked that nine conditions be imposed on the firm before issuing the permits, Surmay said.

The recommendations called for the firm to store all hazardous and flammable material in clearly-marked drums, and in separate areas to conform with the National Fire Prevention Association standards.

The city also recommended drums be stored away from the fencing and that an eight-inch curb be constructed to contain leakage.

U. S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
HAZARDOUS WASTE SITE INVESTIGATION LOG

Site Name PERK CHEMICAL Co.
Site Number:

Site Address 217 S. 1st St.
ELISABETH, N.J.

Brief description of the type of facility and hazard information (Indicate active or inactive)

THIS IS AN ACTIVE CHEMICAL REFINING FACILITY, NOT A HAZARDOUS WASTE DUMP SITE. ORGANIC SOLVENTS RECOVERY PLANT. NO IMMEDIATE ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS ARE EVIDENT, BUT OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS TO PERSONNEL MAY BE PRESENT (STRONG ODORS OF HALOGENATED ORGANIC SOLVENTS WERE EVIDENT). IT WAS SUGGESTED TO CONT. ACT OSHA.

SPILLED 5000 GALLONS OF PERCHLOROETHYLENE IN JULY 1979, ⊗

STATE OF N.J. REFUSES ^{TO ISSUE A PERMIT} ~~PERMISSION~~ TO OPERATE THE FACILITY (UNDER LITIGATION WITH ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE)

Co. HOLDS A STATE PERMIT, TYPE: DPCC

Problem Identification (Date) Source of Identification	State Notified (Date, State contact)	Preliminary Assessment (Date, Regional contact)	Apparent Seriousness of Problem (High-Medium-Low-None)	Site Inspection Agency Performing Inspection (Dates)	Tentative Disposition (Date, Regional contact)	Final Strategy Determinations				
						Corrective Action Underway (State, Federal, Private)	Enforcement (State, Federal) (if State, date to be initiated) (if Federal, Date Case Development Plan Prepared)	Corrective Action Plan Developed but No Resources Available for Implementation (Date), Regional Contact)	No Action Necessary (Date of determination)	STATEGY COMPLETED (Date)
ENFORCEMENT DIVISION 6/14/79	STATE OF N.J. ⊗ 7/25/79	ONGOING 9/11/79 BRIAN V. MORAN (EVE, INC)	LOW TOXIC VOLATILE SOLVENTS SOME FLAMMABLE SOLVENTS (METHYL - ETHYL KETONE)	ERQIB 9/17/79 BRIAN MORAN & JOHN BURGER (EVE INC)						